

VZCZCXYZ0013
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #1367/01 1991114
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 181114Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8659
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 001367

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; MIDDLE EAST SUMMIT; US-RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP;
US TREASURY SECRETARY PAULSON'S TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA; 07/17/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Key international stories today cover the international conference on the Middle East called by US President George W. Bush; the current status of the US-Russia relationship; and implications of US Treasury Secretary Paulson's trip to Latin America.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Middle East Summit"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (07/17) "Yesterday, US President George W. Bush called an international conference on the Middle East that will include Israel, the Palestinian authorities and several of his Arab neighbors, although he seemed to slam the door on two decisive actors in the region - Iran and Syria.

"The summit should serve to resume peace negotiations, which were bogged down during recent years, and also the construction of more democratic and representative institutions in one of the hottest areas in the world.

"... US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will preside over the summit, which will be held before the end of the year. However, its chances of success are already in doubt. Reportedly, only delegates of the countries supporting the creation of a Palestinian State will attend, neither Iran or Syria, which Bush again accused of 'sponsoring Hamas.'

"The exclusion of the two most important rivals of the White House in the region, which were also charged with funding insurgents in Iraq, brought criticism from the Democratic opposition and independent experts, who have asked to open high-level diplomatic dialogue with Damascus and Tehran.

"Bush refuses to hold a direct negotiation with either country, although he did authorize the release of 190 million dollars for the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by Hamas, in 'humanitarian aid' and 228 million dollars in guarantees for loans. Additionally, he asked Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan to expand their aid programs for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas."

- "The US-Russia, just like in Cold War times"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (07/17) "The USG and the Russian government seem to take mutual advantage of a dispute typical of other times regarding the strategic balance and the renewed arms race. The US initiative of establishing an anti-missile system in the Czech Republic and Poland as a protecting shield in space was received by Moscow as a 'challenge' ('a new Berlin Wall'), which

justifies an arms response focused on the expansion of its military complex. Russia's response was the announcement of its withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which leaves Russia free to take unilateral measures.

"Washington's anti-missile defense initiative seems to be a way to distance itself from the uncertain prospects for the Iraqi war and raise the stakes on the sidetracked arms race issue...

"In the current international atmosphere of significant strategic imbalance and asymmetrical conflicts, the risks of WMD have spread while dodging the control of major powers. The US and powers like Russia have a common interest in building balance for the sake of international stability and safety. The dilemma is how to do it without revisiting the old scheme of the Cold War and the confrontation between Western and Eastern powers."

- "Not all fun and games"

Michael Soltys, executive editor of liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald," writes (07/17) "Even in a relatively quiet week there were plenty of upheavals - severe social unrest in Peru, continuing political violence in Colombia and a possible return of revolutionary violence in Mexico. Not to mention a regional swing by US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson.

"... Hank Paulson's regional swing to Brazil, Uruguay and Chile (with top State Department officials Nicholas Burns and Thomas Shannon always one day ahead of him) was neither a clear success nor failure. In Brazil he was dogged by Doha Round issues, especially farm subsidies (which Washington has just raised from 12 to 17 billion dollars) - biofuels provide a powerful bond between the two hemispheric giants but also serve as a forceful reminder of the strength of the US farm lobby and the protective tariffs it slaps on Brazilian ethanol. Biofuels was also on the agenda in Chile whose President Michelle Bachelet has other worries (including mine

strikes like Peru). Uruguay with its lively interest in a free trade agreement with the US was probably the most upbeat part of the visit."

To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our classified website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>

WAYNE